BOOKS AND AUTHORS REVIEWS AND COMMENT

LITERARY CRITICISM AND BOOK NEWS

More War Books—Pleasant Reminiscences of Early Victorian Days: Phiz and His Circle—East and West.

MORE WAR BOOKS.

GERMANY EMBATTLED. An American Interpretation. By Oswald Garrison Villard. 12mo, pp. 181. Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE AUDACIOUS WAR. By Clarence W. Barron. 12mo, pp. 192. Houghton Mifflin Company.

THE GERMAN SPY SYSTEM FROM WITHIN. By Its Intelligence Officer. 12mo, pp. 195. The George H. Doran Company.

This is a war of many paradoxes—that of the alliance between England and Russia in the name of civilization and democracy, for instance. But the one upon which American attention has been concentrated from the first is that of the duality of the German Empire—of the combination there of a most advanced civilization with what, for lack of a better word, is currently called "autocracy," though it certainly is not that. In science, in industry, above all in the solution of socio-economic problems, in the establishment of workable balances between the interests of capital and labor, Germany has led the way, although the mass of her people have never yet had what to the American mind is their due share in the direction of the nation's affairs. This duality, which never seems to have irked the Germans in peace, has disappeared since the outbreak of the war. Germany, as Mr. Villard points out—and here is still another paradox—has become in the supreme hour at once a united democracy—the nation under arms—and a no less united autocracy, to repeat the word that, while incorrect, is yet the only one to express the American point of view.

Attempts to interpret this paradoxical Germany to us have been many during the last decade or so, for some of the best works on the subject were written long ago. But, instead of turning to these undeservedly neglected volumes on the outbreak of the war, we took up instead new books and pamphlets, written to fit the occasion and the cause—chiefly of the Allies—in so far as we did not look exclusively to our daily press, not so much for guidance, as for confirmation of our opinions formed long ago. For, be it confessed, the attitude of the great majority of us toward the Kaiser and his people in this war was not born overnight. Its seeds had long been maturing below the surface during the long years of peace.

Thus we have the ever-growing mass of ex parte testimony, of accusations and counter charges, denunciations and justifications, assertions of the highest motives with which England and Germany have flooded our book markets and filled the columns of our press. That the German propaganda has been fruitless is unmistakably true; it may even be added that it has done more harm than good. It has practically come to an end with the ill-advised meeting of a handful of German-Americans and Americans of German descent in Washington, whose loud and lurid flash in the pan has served to clear the American atmosphere once for all.

Mr. Villard deals in his book, first of all, with this duality of the German Empire; he does not solve the paradox, but he states it as clearly as can be done from the American point of view, and in doing this he explains also why the American majority cannot side with Germany. His book balances admirably well the empire's services to the world with what he considers to be the dangers of its militarism, its autocracy, and he looks forward to a Germany mended, not ended, to a peaceful popular reformation, not a revolution, within the empire, and, as the greatest ultimate result of this war, the abolition of the militarisms of the world.

It is a noble hope. To Mr. Villard it is far more a confident expectation that may be realized soon by the moral influence of the United States when the time shall come to formulate the terms of peace. One has his doubts, however, and so has Mr. Villard himself, for he, too, sees a possibility of what is to less idealistic pacifists already a certainty—that Russian militarism and English navalism, having crushed Germany's military strength and her growing fleet, will refuse to consider disarmament. And with this possibility—this certainty, we may call it—before our eyes, Mr. Villard's argument falls to the ground that for the United States "to rush into extensive preparations for war would be to rob the nation of its vast moral prestige. 'You ask us to disarm,' would be the answer, 'when you are arming as never before!'" Only a month or two ago Yves Guyot pointedly warned us in "The North American Review" that no neutral nation in the Old World or the New will be allowed to have a voice in the formulation of the terms of peace. It is our duty, then, to place ourselves in an adequate state of defence to meet whatever new militarisms are sure to succeed the old.

"The Audacious War" has the inevitable shortcomings of correspondence written from week to week, to which is given the stamp of permanency that publication in book form is supposed to bestow. Some of this material is already out of date; some of its prophecies have already been disproved. On the other hand, the kernel of its contents, its financial, commercial and economic information, remains of the utmost value to the student of the history of the war. The author is heartily, bitterly anti-German. It has been said that this is, first of all, a trade war, and Mr. Barron agrees with this view; only, he maintains, it is not England, but Germany, which precipitated it. The empire's determination to force upon Russia a renewal of unfavorable commercial treaties two years hence is, according to him, at the bottom of it all. He repeats, in permanent book form, the statement made by him while travelling in Europe late last year, that France and Russia possess military geniuses whose very names are as yet unknown to the world. It is certainly time, then, to give them their opportunity, especially in Russia. It is somewhat of an anti-climax to be told, apropos of the English determination to see this war through, that "when a citizen has been suddenly notified that where he could formerly get a train for home every fifteen minutes, the railroad has been taken for military service, and he must get his supper in town, there is not the slightest word of complaint. He only wishes he could contribute more to the empire."

The statistics of orders for war supplies given by the Allies to American manufacturers are fairly staggering; according to the author, they may reach the billion-dollar mark before the end of the struggle. Like Mr. Villard, Mr. Barron warns us against armaments; like him, he believes that out of this world war world peace may come; indeed, "the boon of an international civilization is right at our doors, if the United States would only welcome it and join it." What simpler, he asks, than a Hague tribunal "enforcing peace with such parts of the world's armies and navies as it may need to enforce its decrees?" And once more one doubts the vision.

International espionage in general is stripped of its glamor in the anonymous British ex-intelligence officer's book about the German spy system. He presents it as exactly what it is—a sordid, dishonorable business, carried on on a business basis—for pay. Those looking for the romance of it must return to the fiction and the melodrama whence they have drawn their notions of the work. The fascinating adventuress tempting ambassadors and chiefs of staff to their doom in luxurious metropolitan drawing-rooms is a myth. As a matter of fact, the more one learns of the whole business the more he comes to doubt its usefulness. Twenty years ago Russia was supposed to have filled all Europe with her secret agents; the Russo-Japanese War shifted the suspicion to the conquerors of the Far East. There was a spy scare in this country, especially in our naval establishment. Now the turn of the Germans has come. How much their spy system has accomplished for them, or is accomplishing at the present hour, none can tell. But England certainly has had her scare, even though tales of concrete foundations for artillery near London and similar romances have been officially disproved. According to the present author, the ramifications of the German secret service in England were discovered in the years 1911-1914, so that, "in spite of enormous efforts and lavish expenditure of money by the enemy, little valuable information passed into their hands."

The revelations made in these pages are confined to what is actually known of the German spy system, military, naval and diplomatic. The chapter on "agents provocateurs," to whom the author credits the promotion of strikes and syndicalism in England and France in moments of diplomatic danger, is, he frankly admits, mostly based on surmise.

ERNEST POOLE ("THE HARBOR": MACMILLAN CO)

MR. PECKSNIFF (FROM "PHIZ and DICKENS": DODD, MEAD & CO.)

JAMES LANE ALLEN ("THE SWORD OF YOUTH": CENTURY CO.)

BOOTH TARKINGTON ("THE TURMOIL": HARPER and BROS.)

HABLOT K. BROWNE.

An English Illustrator and His Contemporaries.

PHIZ AND DICKENS. As They Appeared to Edgar Browne. With original illustrations by Hablot K. Browne. 8vo, pp. xiv, 224. Dodd, Mead & Co.

Mr. Browne modestly calls his book a chronicle of small beer, which it is, but it must be added that it is a very entertaining chronicle indeed. If it adds very little to our knowledge of Dickens, or of Phiz, or of the other Victorian novelists whose works he illustrated, Lever and Harrison Ainsworth first among them, it keeps us in a pleasantly reminiscent mood, and, furthermore, there are the reproductions of Phiz's drawings and water-colors to look at. And there is an interesting chapter on the artist's methods of etching and wood engraving.

Mr. Browne tells us his childish reminiscences, gives us incidentally a fragmentary life of his father, glimpses of the great ones who visited him, and, above all, some charming pictures of early Victorian home life. Those were the days of large families, of simple, hearty living, and of a feeling of unquestionable superiority over all foreigners. The theatre was still looked upon somewhat askance. The roast beef of Old England did not yet come from America, entrees were called "made dishes," and in some houses tabooed as "kickshaws," food fit only for foreigners. There was a firm belief in the virtues of port as a tonic; formal dinner parties were rare, but there was a great deal of informal dining together in a casual way. The dinner hour varied surprisingly; sometimes it fell at noon, again late in the evening, and nobody seemed to mind, not even the cook. "This kind of irregularity," Mr. Browne affirms, "was not peculiar to us, on account of the artistic temperament of the head of the household. It was more or less common at this period. The railway has been the real promoter of regularity and punctuality." Means of illumination were most primitive.

Of the Victorian worthies whom the child saw in his father's house, Dickens and Ainsworth impressed him most by their magnificence. Lever, of whom he saw least, he remembers best. Young Ruskin was greatly attached to his aunt, "a vehement young man who would read to her long screeds in manuscript, and who would sometimes set the whole household running about fetching colors, brushes, paper, that he might on the spur of the moment copy a flower from the conservatory. He was supposed to be brilliantly clever." Mr. Browne ekes out his own reminiscences with those of others when he reaches the actors, Macready, Fechter, Phelps, who "like Mr. Crummles carried the tragedian into private life," Robson, and others.

Dickensians can dip again into the Leigh Hunt-Harold Skimpole affair; and they may learn something of the highly respectable original of Miss Mowcher, who, as Foster tells us, objected so strongly to Dickens's misrepresentation of her character in "David Copperfield" that he made amends in the thirty-second chapter of the book. Physically, Dickens's picture of her was not a caricature, but a portrait. The Brownes once revived her with a glass of sherry after she had narrowly escaped an accident: "She sat on the lowest stair rocking her body to and fro, saying as a sort of refrain between sips, 'You see, the body is so long, and the legs so short, and stairs are difficult,' all quite in the genuine Dickensian manner." Altogether, this is an entertaining chronicle of small beer.

EAST AND WEST

A Philosopher's Impressions the World Around.

APPEARANCES. Notes of Travel, East and West. By G. Lowes Dickinson. 12mo, pp. 221. Doubleday, Page & Co.

Mr. Dickinson, seeking the root of the matter, is never heavy. He has the happy knack of suggesting so much more than he will positively state; he knows how to make us his willing collaborators, as deeply interested as he is himself. The enduring meaning of East and West, this is the ultimate goal of his questionings. A homogeneous West he sees, but as to the East he doubts. There is India—that is the East; but China and Japan are nearer to us than to it, he opines:

> Life is an evil; that is the root feeling of India; and the escape is either, for the mass, by death, or for the men of spiritual genius, by a flight to the Eternal. The spiritual attitude is probably an effect, rather than a cause, of an enfeebled grip on life. It is what distinguishes India not only from the West, but from the Far East. For China and Japan are not, in the Indian sense, religious. The Chinese, in particular, strike one as secular and practical. They have had Buddhism, . . . but it is Confucianism that expresses the Chinese attitude to life. . . . And Confucianism is perhaps the best and purest expression of the practical reason that has ever been formulated. . . . The outlook of China is essentially the outlook of the West, only more sane, more reasonable, more leisurely and dignified. . . . And Japan, too, at bottom, is secular. Her true religion is that of the Emperor and his divine ancestors. Her strongest passion is patriotism. A Japanese, like an Indian, is always ready to die. But he dies for the splendors and glories of this world of sense. It is not because he has so little hold on life, but because he has so much, that he so readily throws it away.

Throughout Mr. Dickinson draws a remarkably revealing picture of the English national character, especially of the limitations that have made the race what it is and what it stands for the world over. Elsewhere he gives us the Indian Mahometan in a little sketch that is worthy of being placed beside Kipling's revealing "On the City Wall." For the author's observations in America we care least of all, not because they are so critical, but because the criticism is mostly only a repetition of what other English visitors have said of us. Only, Mr. Dickinson looks farther. He realizes that the America of to-day is the Europe of to-morrow—the cultural levelling which democracy is carrying on, the doubtful future of art, and all. We ourselves realize full well that the question is no longer, What will culture do for democracy? but, What will democracy do to culture? A richly suggestive little volume.

LIFE'S SEAMY SIDE

With a Few Touches of Honor and Heroism.

ROMANCES OF THE PEERAGE. By Thornton Hall, F. S. A. Author of "Love Affairs of the Courts of Europe," etc. With 16 Illustrations. 8vo, pp. viii, 352. Brentano's.

In the present case "romance" seems to denote chiefly the seamy side of life. The episodes related are chiefly expositions of indecency and shame. There may be some glamour attached to the promiscuous amours of a king or a duke, yet in truth they are no whit better than the debaucheries of the humblest of his subjects. The woman whose portrait forms the frontispiece of this handsome volume and whose career is related in its opening chapter may sound very grand under the titles of Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland, but the simple truth is that she was as shameless and as sordid as the veriest strumpet of Seven Dials. Most of the women and men of these romances are fitting companions for her. As for the Dashwood-Wilkes coterie, to which a chapter is given, Mr. Hall owes Barbara Villiers an apology for putting even her into such unspeakable society.

There are exceptions, however, and contrasts; for which let us give thanks. The story of that daughter of Adam Gordon who became Countess of Mar and Kellie is a pure idyll of heroism, invested with far more of true fascination than all the musk scented chronicles of illicit intrigue. The story of the rise of the house of Rothschild is of absorbing interest, well entitled to be called romance on the ground of wonder. And there are other touches of honor and heroism, and men who were brave and women who were pure; sufficient to emphasize with extra dark tints the ruck of roues and wantons which fills so many of the chapters.

"Tommy dearly loves a lord," and most people—particularly in this democratic land—love to read of the doings of sovereigns and nobles. Moreover, it is a common failing of poor humanity to enjoy reading of the frailties and vices, as well as of the heroic achievements, of fellow men and women. Wherefore this volume will doubtless be enjoyed by multitudes. It is a strange mixture, as befits a collection of scenes from this old Vanity Fair of ours, and it contains little or nothing that is new. But at least all that is retold is well told, while the illustrations and the type and paper are a lasting joy to the eye and to taste.

A HIGHLAND CLAN

A Page of Romantic Scotch History.

MACDONALD OF THE ISLES. A Romance of the Past and Present. By A. M. Stirling. With illustrations. 8vo, pp. xii, 295. The John Lane Company.

Mrs. Stirling relates the story of one of the most historic and also most legendary of all the Highland clans. The Lord of the Isles is a familiar name in romance and song, and in real history, and sometimes it is not easy to determine just where romance ends and history begins. The present narrative aims to be true history, and doubtless for the greater part it is. But it begins away back in days of dim tradition, and deals with occurrences and characters which remind us almost of Ossian; certainly of the Sagas of Eric and Olaf. That is not, however, to discredit it, for many of these old tales contain far more truth than fiction.

Dwelling for a time upon the mighty Somerled, the founder of the clan, the narrative portrays with much facility the feuds and conflicts which marked the early history of the Macdonalds and other clans. The author, perhaps unconsciously and certainly with a most unstudied and natural air, falls into the very style of speech of the old chronicles, and tells the stories much as they would have been told in those days. She treats sympathetically, too, of the romantic historic times of Bonnie Prince Charlie and Flora Macdonald, and of the fair Lady Margaret. Thence she leads us by the side of Johnson and Bozzy in their famous tour to the Western Isles, and gives us glimpses of John Wilkes and other personages of that age.

Finally, we have the story of the great wrong of a hundred years ago, by which the rightful heir to the Macdonald name and title was denied them, and three generations were made to suffer unjust losses and reproach. At the end, only five years ago, came a complete righting of the wrong, so far as righting was possible, and the real Macdonalds came to their own again. This last is a most interesting story, but we cannot think that Mrs. Stirling's recital of it is as fortunate in tone as that of the earlier chapters of her history. The story of the "Bosville" suit is full of human nature and of appeals thereto, and we must wish that the author had given a more dramatic touch to a tale which would have served Charles Reade or Wilkie Collins for a masterpiece.

As it is, however, the narrative is there, and in its somewhat matter-of-fact recital it fails not in its appeal to the sympathies and to the imagination, with its reminder that the records of administrative offices and proceedings of the law courts can sometimes be as dramatic and romantic, at least in their purport, as any open air adventures in Highland glens or among the wild seas and shores of the Isles.

VIEWS AND REVIEWS OF CURRENT FICTION

Another First Class American Novel of the New Season—James Lane Allen's Story of Kentucky in War Time—"Moonglade"—Other Reviews.

BLUE BLOOD AND RED.

BLUE BLOOD AND RED. By Geoffrey Corson. 12mo, pp. 395. Henry Holt & Co.

The new publishing season promises to be marked with a red letter in the annals of American fiction. Not only are our novelists of established reputation giving us new books after a more or less protracted silence—James Lane Allen and Booth Tarkington among them—but newcomers of greatest promise offer themselves for a hearing, and prove the validity of their claim to be heard with such exceptionally able first novels as Ernest Poole's "The Harbor," reviewed in these columns a fortnight ago.

And now we have in "Blue Blood and Red" another American novel that, one hopes, will command the success which it so fully deserves. It is a sterling piece of work which for once—and its interest is increased thereby—relegates to the background the great questions which agitate us collectively, and lays the proper emphasis upon the personal lives, the personal affairs of its characters. After all, we are not political or economic or sociological partisans in our private lives, in the bosom of our families, or the conduct of our struggles for a livelihood. There we are simply human beings, united or divided by the old human affections and interests, the hazards of life, the gains of achievement and the accidents of birth.

Mr. Corson has laid the scene of this very human story of his on Staten Island, *terra incognita* still to most New Yorkers, but well worth exploring. Its natural beauties place it first among the greater city's boroughs; it has a history as old as that of Manhattan itself, and social traditions as colorful in their contrasts as its own. The author exercises a certain discretion in identifying his characters with places; perhaps this was necessary, for, although the story of Mrs. Neal Carmichael may have had no precedent in actual life, it breathes the atmosphere of a self-contained social life whose *chronique scandaluse* is exceptionally picturesque, even for a small community. And so we are here among the "hill people" and the "shore folk"—the blue blood and the red—in one of the stately old mansions that are one by one falling into decay or carried off by the wreckers' wagons, and, at the other end, in the house of a tugboat captain. North Shore or South? The author does not say. He is discreet. It really does not matter, for, beyond being a story of Staten Island, this is, as has already been said, a human story—a tale of the loves and happiness and sufferings and struggles and failures and successes of all of us.

Neal Carmichael, the blue blood at the end of its supremacy on the hill, is the protagonist. Socially he faces ruin, or a hazard of new fortunes; emotionally he stands between the daughter of the tugboat captain—love—and a girl of his own class, a woman of the world in her teens, with all the fascinations of her kind. She is infatuation, passion, and, incidentally, material salvation, for she is rich, a fact which, however, never enters as a complication into the development of the young man's divided allegiance. It is between these three that the battle is fought out, a battle that is renewed long after Neal has made his choice and has been disillusionized. Around these three are grouped a number of well seen characters—the family on the hill gravitating downward through mortgages to insolvency, unable to help itself, hoping only that what remains will last till the death of its head; and, on the shore, the sturdy common people, some of whom are ascending the hill and planting new mansions there, much to the dismay of its old occupants; and this, too, is a characteristic Staten Island touch. The Irish priest of these folk is a delightful figure, far more vitally important to his flock than are the clergymen to their sophisticated congregations above. The promised solution of the whole problem at the end one must leave for the author's account. One word more: The episode of Patricia's waiting for the coming of her baby in the lonely farmhouse overlooking the waters of the bay is a remarkably tender piece of work.

THE SWORD OF YOUTH.

THE SWORD OF YOUTH. By James Lane Allen. Illustrated by John Wolcott Adams. 12mo, pp. 261. The Century Company.

Mr. Allen's new story is a worthy epilogue to the history of the Civil War in fiction. Dealing with the last two years of the struggle, the book constantly foreshadows the courageous shouldering of heavy burdens by young shoulders, the resolute attempts by young heads and hands to rebuild shattered fortunes, which were to come with the dawn of peace. It is a tale of the new generation in the stricken South. Its hero is a Kentucky boy, made a man by the loss of his father and brothers on the battlefield, by the service and care of his mother on their ruined plantation. For three years he has secretly cherished the resolution to join the armies when his seventeenth birthday shall have come. He carries it out against the mother's wishes, against her command. She typifies the old South, irreconcilable not only with the North, but with the new South as well, foreshadowed in this boy of hers who has done "nigger labor" ever since her slaves have deserted her, and whom for that reason she hates. A strong, proud woman, true daughter of the Kentucky pioneers, who does not live to see the old spirit, the old courage surviving in the new era, among new conditions, though she comes to recognize it before her death. The heroine, too, is but seventeen when the story opens,

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